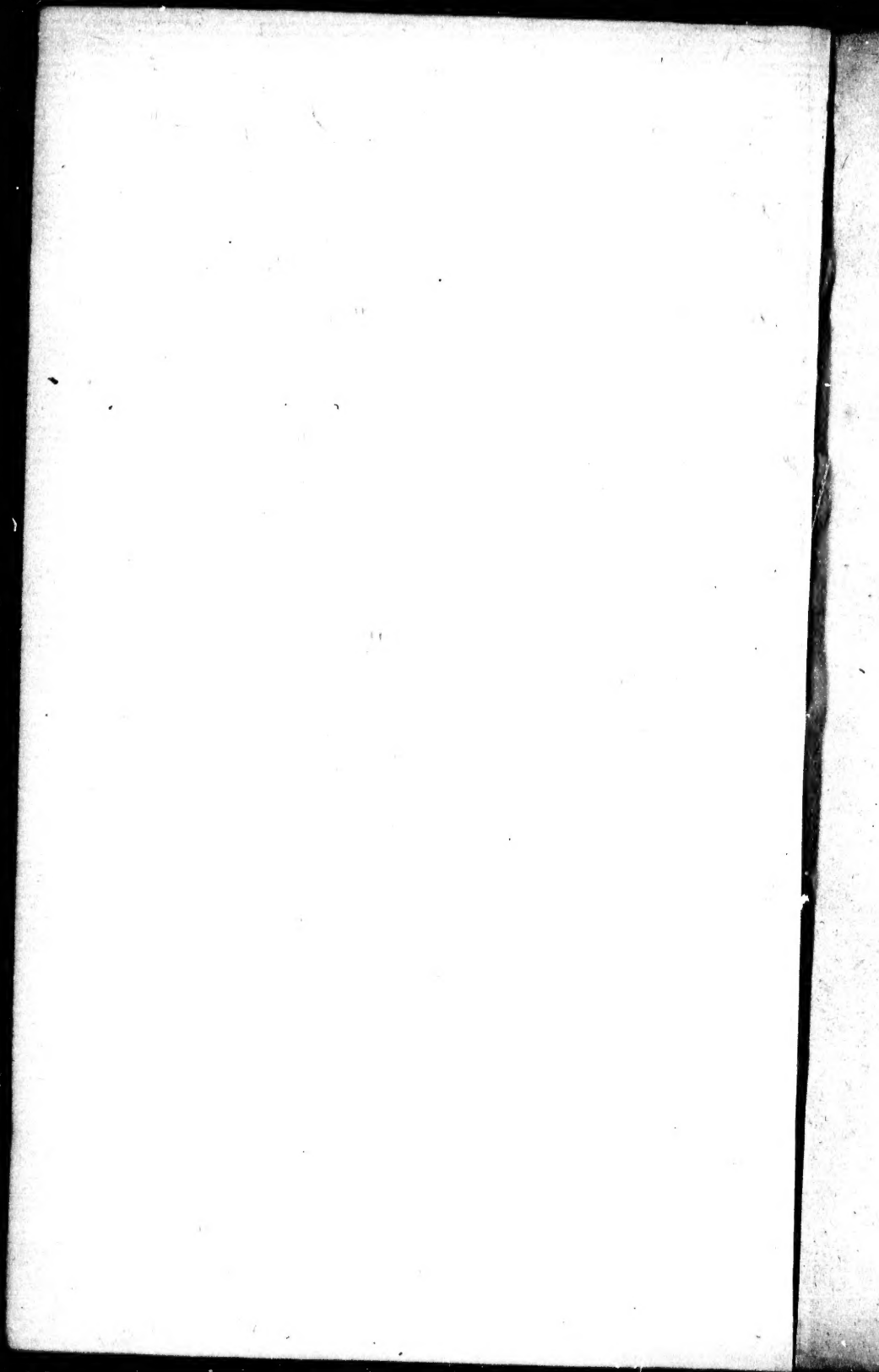




A
VIEW
OF THE
STATE OF PARTIES
IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA;
BEING
AN ATTEMPT TO ACCOUNT FOR THE PRESENT
ASCENDANCY OF THE FRENCH, OR DEMOCRATIC PARTY,
IN THAT COUNTRY;
IN TWO LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

BY
A GENTLEMAN WHO HAS RECENTLY VISITED THE
UNITED STATES.

"Party is the madness of many for the gain of a few."—SWIFT.

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IN SENATE

January 1st 1791

REPORT

OF THE

SENATE

TO THE

ASSEMBLY

OF THE

STATE

A VIEW, &c.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SINCE my return from America, you have made frequent inquiries respecting the present disposition of the American government. You have often remarked, how singular it is, that a people, with whom we are in many ways so closely connected, should testify, on all occasions, so strong an antipathy to their mother country, and so open a partiality to France. These dispositions of the American government no one, I believe, now ventures to call in question. Every act of the British government is

viewed by America through a distorted medium, and converted, if possible, into a topic of reproach and invective : while, on the other hand, the most flagrant acts of injustice on the part of France are either passed over in total silence, or studiously extenuated by those towards whom they are directed. The causes of this Anti-Anglican spirit of the American government lie deeper than is commonly imagined : and, in compliance with your desire, I shall endeavour to lay before you such information on this interesting topic, as a short residence in the United States has enabled me to acquire.

Certain obvious causes of the antipathy of the Americans to England must present themselves to the most superficial observer. The animosities engendered by the revolutionary war, it may be supposed, have not altogether subsided : and the unavoidable inconveniences resulting to the commerce of America, from our naval supremacy, must likewise be a source of alienation and disgust. But surely the Ame-

icans have less cause to cherish the animosities of the revolutionary war than we ourselves have : and the naval supremacy of our country is unquestionably productive of greater advantage than inconvenience to the United States. The origin, therefore, of the French bias, which at present distinguishes the American government, must be sought for in other circumstances. The result of my observation on the state of parties in America was, that this bias proceeded partly from the animosities of the revolutionary war, partly from the jarring views and interests of the different sections of the Union, partly from the prejudices of certain leading statesmen ; but chiefly from the excessively democratic nature of the American government, from the universal suffrage which is its distinguishing feature, and the violent party contentions by which such a government must always be agitated.

It is the last of these circumstances, the nature of the American government, to which, as the most powerful of the causes we are investigating, I shall first solicit your attention, In

order to explain the nature of this singular government, it will be necessary, in the first place, to take a very cursory view of its history, and to notice the change of parties which, in the short space of twenty years, has already taken place in the United States. This short disquisition, while it is essential to the solution of the problem we are considering, may perhaps suggest to you some curious observations on the nature of free governments in general, and more particularly on that of the United States.

It is well known, that the present constitution of America was framed by a body of delegates from the several states, who sat at Annapolis, in the year 1789, and of which Generals Washington and Hamilton, and Dr Franklin, were the most conspicuous members. It is also well known, that the constitution, or plan of government, which this august body, after many months deliberation, gave forth, (although the United States have now for twenty years been prospering under it beyond all expectation and example,) was established with much difficulty and after a strenuous opposition from a

powerful and numerous party, who were unfriendly to its adoption. The party, which framed and supported it, was composed of those who saw the necessity of the United States, considered as one nation, being provided with a national government; that is to say, with an organ or instrument, by which their intercourse with foreign states might be carried on, and by which, at the same time, such matters of internal police, as are closely connected with that intercourse, might be regulated. In furnishing the United States with this indispensable organ, the chief difficulty consisted in establishing a government, which should both possess sufficient vigour for the purposes its founders had in view, and at the same time be armed with no prerogatives that might seem dangerous to the liberties of the nation, or deviate from those forms of democratic polity to which the American people are so closely attached.

The constitution actually framed, seems, in an eminent degree, to possess both these recommendations. The powers, with which it is

invested, are sufficient for the ends of its institution : and its forms are at the same time strictly conformable to the republican model. It consists of a president, who is elected every four years, by electors chosen in each state, by the legislature of the state ; and in whom is vested the supreme executive authority of the United States. The legislative powers of the general government are confided to a senate, composed of thirty-two members, (two being chosen by the legislature of each state,) who hold their seats for six years ; and to a house of representatives, which is renewed every two years, and consists of one member for every thirty thousand voters throughout the union.

The functions, which this government was appointed to exercise, are such as arise out of the foreign relations of the United States, together with a few matters of domestic police, which can be more advantageously managed by a national government than by the legislatures of the individual states. Foreign treaties and embassies, therefore, the declaration of peace and war, the regulation of foreign trade

and levying of the customs, the regulation of the coin and of the law of bankruptcy, are the exclusive province of the general government: while the proper legislature of each state still administers all those branches of government, that relate to its own individual concerns and internal police. The judicatories of the general and state governments have their respective jurisdictions apportioned by the same rules. The courts of the United States (of which there is one in each state, and a supreme court of appeal at Washington,) take cognizance of all questions occurring between foreigners, between a foreigner and a citizen of the United States, between states themselves, between citizens of different states, or between a state and a citizen of another state. The courts of the individual states retain the cognizance of all causes civil and criminal, properly originating within the bounds of their own immediate jurisdiction.

This government, so inoffensive in its structure, and so necessary in its operation, encountered the most bitter opposition from a large and formidable party, and was only at last

established by the persevering exertions of those, who saw that its institution was indispensable, not only to the welfare, but to the very existence of the union. America, in the opinion of her wisest and most patriotic citizens, was at that time on the eve of civil war and national bankruptcy ; and nothing, it was evident, but the establishment of a strong national government could avert these greatest of all calamities. The successful conclusion, to which the revolutionary war had been conducted, naturally rendered them anxious that the future proceedings of the nation should be equally respectable in the eyes of the world ; and that the enemies of their country should have no handle for saying, that they had gained little by the acquisition of independence ; since civil discord was an evil scarcely inferior to foreign oppression. Actuated by these motives, the friends of the federal constitution exerted all their energies to procure its adoption ; and, after many struggles, did obtain the suffrages of a majority of the state conventions, assembled to deliberate on its

merits. Under the auspices of Washington, who, after being the leader of his country in war, was summoned, by their unanimous voice, to be their first ruler in peace, the federal constitution commenced its operation on the 4th of March, 1789; and the prosperity which America has enjoyed under its influence, bears ample testimony to the wisdom of its founders. The party, who voted for and procured its adoption, received the appellation of Federalists; those who opposed it were distinguished by the name of Antifederalists. Thus arose the two great parties, which have since divided the union. Their views and objects are at present very different from what they were at the time, when they first marshalled themselves in array against each other; but their component parts are still nearly the same.

The party which opposed the establishment of the apparently unexceptionable constitution, which forms the general government of the United States, consisted of persons, who, though professing to have the same object in view, were actuated by various motives. The objec-

tion urged by all was, that the federal constitution was too powerful, splendid, and costly a government ; and might prove dangerous to the liberties, as well as burthensome to the finances, of the nation. The powers, conferred on the general government, encroached too far, it was alleged, on the efficacy and importance of the state governments ; and in the same degree that they armed the former with prerogatives dangerous to the citizen, disqualified the latter from protecting his rights. The office of president was likewise represented as approaching too near to the monarchical standard. The fears that were entertained, or at least expressed, on this subject, are well described in the *Federalist*. " Here," it is observed, in the 67th number of that admirable work, being one of the numbers attributed to General Hamilton, " the writers against the constitution seem to " have taken pains to signalise their talent of " misrepresentation. Calculating upon the aversion of the people to monarchy, they have " endeavoured to enlist all their jealousies and " apprehensions in opposition to the intended

" president of the United States ; not merely
 " as the embryo, but as the full-grown progeny
 " of that detested parent. To establish the pre-
 " tended affinity, they have not scrupled to
 " draw resources even from the regions of fic-
 " tion. The authorities of a magistrate, in few
 " instances greater, in some instances less, than
 " those of a governor of New York, have been
 " magnified into more than royal prerogatives.
 " He has been decorated with attributes, supe-
 " rior in dignity and splendour to those of a
 " King of Great Britain. He has been shewn
 " to us with the diadem sparkling on his brow,
 " and the imperial purple flowing in his train.
 " He has been seated on a throne, surrounded
 " with minions and mistresses ; giving audi-
 " ence to the envoys of foreign potentates in
 " all the supercilious pomp of majesty. The
 " images of Asiatic despotism and voluptuous-
 " ness have not been wanting to crown the ex-
 " aggerated scene. We have been taught to
 " tremble at the terrific visages of murdering
 " janissaries ; and to blush at the unveiled
 " mysteries of a future seraglio."

The federal party naturally comprehended the greater part of those, whose property and education gave them a deep interest in the welfare of the community, and led them to perceive the necessity of a national government. The antifederal party consisted, for the most part, of persons of an opposite description. Speaking generally, one was the party of the gentry, the other of the commonalty. Many of the antifederalists, therefore, (at least if we may place any reliance on the assertions of their political opponents,) being men of desperate fortune and abandoned character, were, in their opposition to the establishment of the federal constitution, actuated by no better motive, than a wish to see realized, those very national calamities, which it was calculated to avert; and even enjoyed the prospect of those civil disorders, in which men of this description know they have nothing to lose, and imagine that something may possibly be gained. It is probable, also, that a considerable part of this faction was instigated, merely by the envy and dislike, which they felt to the proceedings of men, whom they were forced to regard,

though unwilling to acknowledge, as their superiors; and by aversion to the establishment of a government, in whose honours and emoluments they had little chance of participating. Those members of the faction, whose talents and zeal had marked them for its leaders, were probably animated by the hopes of forming a strong and efficient party, which, at some future time, might put them in possession of that very government, of which they affected so highly to disapprove. They proceeded on the safe calculation, that in a government purely republican, those who take the popular side, are sure in the end to prevail. By raising an outcry, therefore, about liberty and the rights of the people, and expressing much alarm for the dangerous tendency of the general government, they laid in a stock of popular favour, which might afterwards be turned to their own advantage: and thus commenced that system, which has since been so fatally efficacious,—that system of delusion, misrepresentation, and falsehood, which, it will appear in the sequel, are

among the leading characteristics of American politics.

The government being established, its offices were of course filled by persons of that party, which had framed and procured its establishment. The illustrious person placed at its head, selected for its principal departments, some of the most eminent of his companions in arms, together with other gentlemen, recommended by their civil qualifications, to the offices which he conferred on them. The celebrated Hamilton, who had been his aid-du-camp during the war, was appointed secretary to the treasury ; General Knox, who had also acted a conspicuous part in the revolutionary struggle, was placed in the station of secretary at war. Mr Jefferson was appointed secretary of state, and Mr Randolph attorney-general. All these gentlemen were eminent either for their talents or services. The first Congress was composed, with very few exceptions, of the patrons and supporters of the new constitution, and the state legislatures were filled with persons of the same description.

Of the four persons above mentioned, as composing the President's Cabinet, he who most amply fulfilled the expectations of the country, was the secretary to the treasury. General Hamilton, it is well known, was equally remarkable for the greatness and the versatility of his genius. He had served with much reputation in the war of the revolution, and evinced talents that, on a military theatre, would have raised him to the highest distinction. No sooner had he sheathed his sword, and accepted the appointment of secretary to the treasury, than he shewed, that he was no less fitted to shine as a statesman than as a soldier. And some years afterwards, when the necessities of his situation compelled him to resign the high office, which Washington had conferred on him, he betook himself to the profession of the law, and soon rose to the highest eminence at the American bar. *

* The various talents and services of General Hamilton present a constellation of excellence, of which there are a few examples in the antient republics, but which can hardly occur in any settled country of modern times; having in this case been drawn into notice, by the unlooked-for contingencies, to which

Under the excellent management of this statesman, the finances of the United States were soon reduced to a state of order, that laid the foundation of the prosperity which the country has since enjoyed. The official reports drawn up by him, and presented to Congress, exhibit a luminous view of the situation, in which America then stood with respect to her pecuniary resources; and reflect the highest honour on the financial talents, as well as the general political knowledge, of their author.

During the first term of General Washing-

the war of American independence gave rise. The fame of Hamilton, in America, is second only to that of Washington: and, indeed, it is confidently believed, that the great founder of the American nation owed no small portion of his glory to the merits of his distinguished minister. It is certain, at least, that many of the most admired state-papers and speeches of Washington proceeded from the pen of Hamilton. The premature death of this great man excited general commiseration throughout America and Europe. After reaching the first ranks of eminence in almost every line of human exertion, and while yet in the vigour of his days, and the midst of his usefulness, he fell a sacrifice to the rancour of a political rival: leaving to a numerous family, little more, than the honour of his illustrious name, and the benefit of his great example.

ton's administration, the success, attending the operation of the new constitution, was such, as amply fulfilled the expectations, and testified the wisdom, of its founders. On the expiry of the four years, for which he had been elected president, this great man was again unanimously re-elected: and the second term of his administration was equally prosperous with the first. At the end of eight years, declining to be again re-elected, Mr Adams, who had previously filled the office of vice-president, was chosen to succeed General Washington in the chief magistracy of the Union. During the administration of this second president of the United States, the federal party gradually declined in strength; and, on the expiry of his term of office, it was completely overthrown. Mr Jefferson, who had placed himself at the head of the opposite party, was elected president; and the adherents of this faction (which has since passed by the different names of the republican, democratic, or French party,) soon obtained a decided majority, both in Congress and in the legislatures of the individual states. The federal constitution was thus administered, for twelve

years only, by those who had originally framed it, and procured its adoption. At the end of that time, viz. in the year 1800, it passed, and has ever since continued, in the hands of those, who, at the time of its establishment, were its avowed and inveterate enemies.

The means, by which so total and surprising a revolution was in so short a time effected, have an immediate reference to the object of this letter ; and are the more deserving of inquiry, that they seemed to be but imperfectly understood even in America ; and I have never met with any explanation of them, that was to me at all satisfactory. The overthrow of federalism has been ascribed by some, to certain obnoxious measures, adopted by the government, under the administration of Washington and Adams ; and particularly to their raising a small standing army of 6000 men, and proposing to build a small navy of six ships of the line. But this is obviously insufficient to account for so great a change. No person in his senses could seriously disapprove of raising an army of 6000 men, which, in so extensive a territory as that of the United States, would

be hardly perceptible. As little could it injure the government to build six 74-gun ships : as such a navy is nothing more, than what might seem necessary, for maintaining the police of their own ports and harbours. Neither, could the downfall of federalism be occasioned, as some have asserted, by what has been called the misconduct of President Adams. Besides being charged with a demeanour, rather more distant and haughty, than befitted the first magistrate of a republic, this gentleman is accused of a capital error of administration, in having omitted to declare war against revolutionary France, at that period, when she seemed inclined to wage war with every well-regulated community, and had offered peculiar indignities to America herself. But this explanation is equally unsatisfactory with the former ; for that partiality towards France, which has since unhappily been so conspicuous in the great body of the American nation, was even then become too apparent : and it seems probable, that, by declaring war against France, President Adams might have accelerated, but certainly could not have

retarded, the approaching downfall of his party. After a long and attentive consideration of the subject, I have adopted the opinion, that the change of parties in America was a great movement, that arose from the combined operation of two causes, namely, the peculiar frame and structure of the American constitution, and the peculiar situation in which America was then placed with regard to Europe. My ideas on these points I shall now endeavour to explain as briefly as possible.

Every nation, that has a popular government, must be divided into parties, and these parties must be constantly at war with each other. In order to fight, they must have subjects of contention, and these subjects of contention must be either internal or foreign. For some time, both before and after the establishment of their national government, the attention of the Americans was wholly engrossed by their domestic concerns. The constitution of the government, under which they were to live, and on which their future happiness or misery so essentially depended, was a matter of sufficient importance

to occupy all their attention, and furnish employment for all their intrigues. The establishment of the federal government, therefore, as has already been stated, gave rise to the first great division that took place in the country. For several years, the whole nation was split into two parties, of which one was unceasingly occupied in commending the federal constitution and the federal government ; the other, in abusing the constitution, and in reviling, and striving to undermine the party, by which it was framed and administered.

Such was the occupation of the American parties for several years succeeding the establishment of the federal constitution. At last the French revolution, and the stupendous events which followed it, diverted their attention from domestic concerns, and fixed it almost exclusively on the great scenes that were passing on the opposite shore of the Atlantic. The dawn of the French revolution presented itself to the astonished Americans, in the light of a mighty people, bursting the shackles of tyranny, and realising those blissful visions, which the friends of humanity and free-

dom have in every age so fondly indulged. Their national vanity was flattered by the share, which their own revolution was thought to have had, in the production of the memorable event : and they rejoiced in the transporting idea, that the blessings of free and popular government, which they considered as originating in perfection with themselves, were about to be extended to the whole human race. For several years they resigned themselves to this pleasing delusion : at last the spell was dissolved ; but it maintained its influence over their minds, long enough, to produce the most important effects on the state of their parties. At first, as I have already stated, nearly the whole nation was borne away by the torrent ; the whole democratic party certainly without any exception. The principles, which seemed to govern the French revolutionists, at the outset of their career, were entirely conformable to the views of that faction ; and were of course, no less industriously propagated by the leaders, than greedily imbibed by the party at large. The only individuals, who, at that period of philanthropy and frenzy, ventured

to express any distrust or apprehension, with regard to the ultimate issue of the French revolution, were a few of the most cautious and reflecting of the federal party. It appeared to these sagacious persons, to be highly improbable, that a country, so differently situated as France from America, could by any means be rendered capable of the same form of government ; or that, though a republican government could exist in a new under-peopled country, at a distance from the theatre of war, it could at all exist, or at least exist for any length of time, in an old, fully-peopled country, inhabited by a martial race, and surrounded with warlike neighbours. Such, in particular, were the sentiments of General Washington and of General Hamilton : and though it was too soon apparent, that the principles of these illustrious men were just, and their fears well founded, the prevalence of the opposite sentiments among the great body of the people was seriously detrimental to the interests of the federal party. The love of freedom, so congenial to the lower orders of every state, the admiration of French equality, so natural to the

American populace, pervaded by far the greater part of the nation : and the prudent caution of General Washington and his wise advisers, was stigmatized, as proceeding, from a cold insensibility to the cause of freedom, and an undue partiality to the interests of England,—then, as was supposed, endeavouring to form a coalition, for the base purposes of checking the emancipation, and partitioning the territory, of France. It may be easily imagined, how quickly the concurrent operation of these two causes, during the progress of the French revolution, thinned the ranks of the federalists, and increased the strength of their opponents. In point of fact, there can be no doubt, that the French revolution had a material share in the overthrow of the federal party. In point of date, the two events correspond with a singular exactness. The federal party may be said to have come into power, when the federal constitution was established, in the year 1789 ; and its final overthrow was marked by the accession of Mr Jefferson to the presidency, in the year 1800. The French revolution began about the year 1790, and may be said to

have reached its consummation about the year 1800, when Buonaparte declared himself first Consul of the French republic.

So early as the year 1797, Europe had assumed many features of the frightful picture which she now exhibits. France had made considerable progress in the destructive career she has since too successfully pursued, and Britain was approaching to the proud station, which I hope she will long maintain, of the last receptacle of European freedom, and the only remaining refuge of suffering humanity. It was then becoming apparent, that there would soon exist, but two independent nations in Europe: and the Americans began to be apprehensive, that it would be necessary for them, as for every other people, to take a share in the war, which these mighty rivals were waging with each other. Washington, by issuing a proclamation of neutrality, superseded, at that time, the necessity of a measure, which, in any event, must have been prejudicial to the United States; and laid the foundation of the neutral trade, from which his countrymen have since derived such incal-

culable benefits. But still, though the country remained at peace, every American was called on to take a side ; to choose either the French or the English party. From this time, the objects of political discussion in the United States were exclusively foreign. The paltry concerns of their own administration dwindled into insignificance, when compared with the wonderful events, which almost every day brought forth in Europe, and by which they foresaw that their own interests might afterwards be materially affected.

The antifederal party being established in power, it became necessary for them to draw up a political creed ; to choose a set of principles, which should be the watch-word of their party, and by the propagation of which, they might maintain themselves in the situations, in which, by dint of so much perseverance, they had at last been placed. When entrusted with the administration of its offices, they found no fault with the federal constitution, which, during their exclusion from power, had been the object of their unceasing hostility : the federalists of course, whatever were their opi-

nions of those, by whom the government was now administered, found no fault with the government itself ; so that the change of parties concurred with the aspect of affairs in Europe entirely to take away the original ground of dispute. Foreign politics became the exclusive object of attention ; and it was necessary for the antifederalists, with a view to the interests of their party, to choose a system of foreign politics ; in other words, to make a choice between France and England. Their bias towards France was but too observable before their accession to power : and the striking change in the politics and constitution of that country, produced after their accession to power, by the unprincipled ambition of Buonaparte, had no tendency to withdraw them from the unfortunate predilection. This is the remarkable feature of American politics. It was natural, that republican America should be attached to republican France ; but when France ceased to be a republic, and, on the contrary, became the abode of the most cruel despotism that ever afflicted the human race, it

seems incredible, that the Americans should even then have persevered in their partiality for her, and their dislike to her illustrious rival. France is not only herself the victim of a degrading tyranny, but the cradle of a military despotism, that has overspread the continent of Europe ; and, on a review of the relative situation, in which America, England, and France have for some years been placed, it appears at first view almost impossible, that the Americans should have preferred the alliance of France to that of England. France has laid prostrate the liberties of continental Europe, and openly aims at the subjugation of the world. Great Britain is the only remaining obstacle to the execution of this design ; and nothing but her subjection is now wanting to crown the ambition of the Gallic tyrant. Were the Americans mere unconcerned spectators of this contest, the most sublime, perhaps, which the world has ever witnessed, the common sentiments and feelings of human nature, and more particularly the sentiments and feelings of republicans, ought to render them averse to the oppressor, and obtain their good wishes at

least for the nation, which constitutes the bulwark of the civilized world. But the Americans have much stronger reasons for respecting the character, and courting the alliance of Great Britain, than can proceed either from the hatred of tyranny, the admiration of valour, or even the principles of republicanism. They are, at this moment, reposing under the shield of British protection : their existence, as an independent nation, is indissolubly linked to that of Great Britain. The downfall of America would follow that of England, as certainly as the rising of the sun is followed by the diffusion of light. Notwithstanding these obvious reasons of attachment and friendship, the American government is hostile to Great Britain. Their personal interests, real or supposed, lead them to sacrifice the best feelings of human nature, and perhaps the true interests of their own country, on the altar of popular prejudice ; and to persist in a predilection, real or feigned, for the inveterate enemy of the country, which constitutes their sole security against foreign subjugation.

This proceeds on the supposition, that a majority, or at least a great part, of the American people is inclined to be hostile to England; because the American government is composed of individuals, who are the heads of a party, and can retain their power only so long as that party continues to be the more powerful of the two. This Anti-Anglican tendency of the American people arises partly from sentiments originally inherent in the people, and partly from the influence of their leaders, who of course endeavour to foster and propagate the sentiments, to which they owe their own elevation. I shall now endeavour to explain the causes of this Anti-Anglican propensity, distinguishing, as far as possible, the sources of antipathy, which are original, from those that proceed from the influence and exertions of the democratic leaders.

1. In the first place, the animosities of the revolutionary war have not been entirely obliterated by the lapse of thirty years. The Americans, being the successful party in that war, ought to

be the least unwilling to forgive and forget, the differences in which it originated ; and with the liberal part of the community, this is accordingly the case.

Many of those who acted a conspicuous part in the revolutionary war, and even carried arms on the side of America, are now marshalled under the banners of the federal party; that is, of the party which is attached to the interests of England. When these persons had done what they conceived to be their duty to their native or adopted country, and avenged the wrongs they held to be inflicted on her by the parent state, they dropped all feelings of hostility ; they laid aside their resentment, when they sheathed their swords. They had candour to pardon errors, that sprung from circumstances unprecedented in politics, and could separate the mistakes of a minister from the character of a people. On the lower orders, however, these considerations can have little influence. They see but the dark side of the picture. Overlooking not only the errors of judgment, from which the colonial war arose, but the calamities to Britain herself,

by which these errors were expiated, they brood over the temporary miseries it inflicted on America ; and are unable, or unwilling, to perceive those circumstances of common interest and indissoluble connexion, which ought to render America the perpetual ally of England. This sentiment of hostility is much more general in the southern, than in the middle or eastern* states ; but prevails, more or less, throughout the whole extent of the union, and must not be overlooked in accounting for the ascendancy of the French or antifederal party.

2. The democratic party was, from the moment of its birth, inclined to take the side of France, merely because the federal party had taken the side of England. Those feelings of affection and respect for the English character, which have always more or less prevailed in America, were, at the close of the revolutionary

* In America, the States of New England, which are often in Europe called the Northern, are uniformly called the Eastern States ; because they lie to the eastward of New York and New Jersey ; which, with Pennsylvania and Maryland, are called the Middle States.

war, confined almost exclusively, to the federal party, which was composed chiefly of the better orders of the people ; and their prevalence among this party seems to have inspired the lower classes with the apprehension of a return of affection, between the United States and the mother country. It is easy to see, that the circumstances of connexion between America and England can produce their full effect, only on persons of a certain degree of refinement. The two countries have the same language ; their religion, laws, customs, and manners, are very nearly the same : the constitution of America is evidently formed on the English model : and what constitutes their chief distinction from other nations, their boasted freedom, is entirely of English origin. It is only persons of education, however, who can feel the force, or admit the justice, of these circumstances of connexion. The influence of English literature (which is great in America) must evidently be confined to such persons alone. Many of the upper classes have relations and connexions in England ; and many of them have travelled in Eu-

rope ; where they could not fail to draw a comparison between the two great nations of that hemisphere, much to the advantage of the land of their forefathers. * Sensible of the bias, which these circumstances of connexion naturally produced in the federal party, and being themselves unsusceptible of the feelings, in which that bias originated, the opposite faction seems to have conceived a violent jealousy of the federalists, and to have entertained apprehensions, that their British predilections would render them less tenacious, than they ought to be, of the rights and interests of America. Washington † himself did not escape the suspicion of an undue partiality to England ; and Hamilton was constantly reviled as a British agent. When a body of men, therefore, stepped forward, who not only disclaimed all connexion with, and attachment to, Great Britain, but even expressed a contempt or dislike of her character, and shewed a disposition to view all her acts through

* See the excellent pamphlet on the French government, by an American.

† See Marshall's Life of Washington.

an unfriendly *medium*, the people were gradually induced to withdraw their confidence from their original and natural rulers, and to commit their destinies to a description of men, of whose attachment to England they could have no suspicion. It has thus happened, by a singular fatality, that those very circumstances of connexion, which ought to have rendered England the constant ally of America, have been productive of alienation and disgust between the countries ; and have not only deprived the government of America of all partiality for, but have rendered it decidedly hostile to, England. The purely republican nature of the American government renders the people the source of all authority : the illiterate commonalty are jealous of the English connexions and predilections of the higher classes ; and think it safer to bestow their suffrages on men, who have neither English connexions nor English partialities. England and America ought to live in perpetual amity : they would do so, if the better classes enjoyed in America, that influence which they possess in Europe ; and which it is for the in-

terest of the people themselves, that they should enjoy. But in America every thing is at the disposal of the mob, or rather of those interested leaders, who can render the passions and prejudices of the mob subservient to their own advantage. When in such a country the flood-gates of democracy are opened, every generous feeling, and every liberal principle, must be swept away by the torrent.

3. There is yet another reason why the ruling party in America find it for their interest to espouse French rather than English politics. To revile the conduct of England, and gloss over the faults of France, serves the purposes, which the democratic leaders have in view, better than the opposite line of conduct would do. The Americans are a bold, active, and enterprising people, having all the vigour of Englishmen, combined with the enterprise of new colonists. The systems of policy, therefore, adopted by their favourite leaders, must be of a nature fitted to rouse and inflame, and keep in constant agitation, a turbulent, fiery, and fe-

rocious populace. The leaders of the democratic faction know that French, or rather Anti-English principles, possess this quality in a much higher degree than those of the opposite description. England is, as to America, a much more powerful country than France ; because England, by means of her naval power, comes into immediate contact with America ; and France, by the same power, is excluded from the western hemisphere. The democratic leaders, therefore, bestow the most lavish abuse upon England, and, as far as possible, endeavour to exasperate the people against her, precisely because she has the means of *immediately* hurting them : whereas France, who has inflicted on them much deeper injuries than ever they received at the hands of England, is seldom or never mentioned by them but in terms of indifference or of commendation. The injuries done by France, however, to America, consist chiefly in the confiscation of goods and shipping in the ports of the former country ; and these, being injuries which are felt chiefly, if not entirely, by the opulent merchants, are of

course extenuated and glossed over in a system of politics, that is intended for the level of the populace. While the British navy subsists, America is inaccessible to France : and the leading demagogues of that country exhaust their ingenuity in calumnies and invectives against their protector ; because it gratifies the ferocious populace they delude, to insult a powerful nation that has the means of annoying them. The democratic leaders seem to be careless of the evils, which this line of conduct may eventually bring down upon their country. Provided they can retain their offices and emoluments, they think little of the means by which they contrive to do so. As little do they seem to reflect on the gross inconsistency and absurdity of the politics they advocate. They express little or no resentment against France, because, though she has done them incalculable mischief, she can do them less injury than England : and they affect to consider, as their deadly enemy, the nation that has the power of defending them, and actually does defend them, against the people, that has swallowed up the

liberties of Europe. But this power, which protects them against France, could also, they know, lay their principal towns in ashes, and blockade their shipping in their harbours; and they revile and insult the nation, possessed of this power, because, by so doing, they keep alive that agitation and ferment, which are the vital air of a democratic community.

Connected with the subject of Britain being the present protector of America, there is another idea, which probably enters into the consideration of the violent politicians of the latter country. Their haughty spirit of independence renders them peculiarly adverse to the notion, of receiving protection from a country, which they consider as having been once their oppressor, and whose yoke it is their boast to have thrown off. At the termination of the American war, there were not wanting politicians on both sides of the Atlantic, but particularly in the United States, who predicted that the greatness of Britain was on the wane; and that the disjunction of her transatlantic dominions was the forerun-

ner of her own downfall, or at least a blow, from which she would not speedily recover. All these expectations, however, have been totally disappointed: the prosperity of Britain has never advanced with so rapid a step, as since the termination of the American war; and for several years past she has been the protector of her own revolted colonies. The United States derive as much benefit from the British navy as they could possibly have done, had they still formed an integral part of the British empire. They are unwilling, however, to acknowledge so great a favour from the country, which they formerly baffled, and which they still affect to set at defiance. The obligation, which they refuse to acknowledge, they cannot avoid feeling: and hence arises a strange mixture of sentiment, which induces them to hate their protector, and to revile their best ally.

It appears, then, that the ascendancy of the democratic party in America, is chiefly owing to its having embraced the political principles most consonant to the sentiments of a rude and fierce democracy, exercising supreme authority,

and uncontrouled by any of those checks which, in governments less democratic, are found to be so useful in moderating the zeal, and correcting the errors of the populace. The principles of this party are infinitely less agreeable to truth, to justice, and to sound policy, than those of the federalists: but they have been adopted, and are still cultivated, because they are more congenial to the animosities engendered by the revolutionary war, because they are in opposition to the principles advocated by the federalists, and because they afford more abundant food and exercise to the turbulence and fury of a contentious populace.

In a popular government, every party contains two separate descriptions of people, those who lead, and those who are led. The leaders are at first determined, by principle, by interest, or by accident, to choose the party which they prefer; and the reaction of their influence on the party is more or less perceptible, in proportion to the greater or less degree of activity they display in promoting its interests. It has already been explained, that the leaders of the

democratic party in America have obtained possession of the government, by choosing that set of principles, which was most acceptable to the ruder and less refined part of the community : and it is proper to add, that they owe their ascendancy also, in some degree, to the superiority which, in one respect, they have always manifested over their political opponents ; to their greater activity and zeal in propagating the principles, and advancing the interests, of their party.

It might have been inferred, *a priori*, from the difference between the materials of which the two parties are composed, that their conduct would be marked by the difference, which is here alluded to. The leading federalists are gentlemen of fortune, talents, and education, the natural rulers of the country. The leaders of the democratic party, on the other hand, are, for the most part, what may be called politicians of fortune ; adventurers, who follow politics as a profession. With them politics are a primary, with the federalists, they are rather a secondary consideration. The democrates, be-

ing in general men of inferior birth and breeding to the federalists, can more easily mix with the rabble, and practise the tribunitian arts. They affect, in their dress and manners, to regard themselves as of the plebeian order, and condescend to a familiarity of intercourse with the vulgar, from which gentlemen would revolt. They practise, in short, with greater activity and perseverance than the federalists, all the means by which the interests of their party can be advanced. These means, as being curious in themselves, and totally different from any thing that is known in this country, are not unworthy of explanation.

It is in the great towns that these means are employed with the greatest activity, and attended with the most complete success ; and a statement of what is done in New York will furnish a good specimen of what is done throughout the union. This city, which contains about 80,000 inhabitants, is divided into ten wards, each of which has an alderman and officers of its own. This division has been made chiefly for the convenience of elections ; which, in a

country where suffrage is universal, and party spirit runs so high, could not be conducted on the same plan as in England, without being the source of tumults and bloodshed. On occasion of elections, each ward has its own poll, where the votes are given in on written tickets. The federalists and republicans* of each ward hold occasionally separate meetings, in which they discuss the state of public affairs, and the present condition of their respective parties. On great occasions, general meetings of all the federalists and all the republicans in the city are separately called by their respective leaders. These general meetings, which are often very numerous, are addressed in an animated harangue by some

* It is proper here to mention, that the democratic party have, for some time past, styled themselves Republicans. The federalists, not to be deficient in a popular appellation, call themselves Federal Republicans. The names, however, which the two parties give to each other, are very different from those which they arrogate to themselves. The Republicans call the Federalists, Aristocrates, Tories, Englishmen, and British agents. The Federalists retort, on their adversaries, the still more opprobrious epithets of Democrates, Frenchmen, and Jacobins.

orator, who moves a string of resolutions, that
 have been previously concerted. The resolu-
 tions are adopted by acclamation, and publish-
 ed in all the newspapers. During my stay in
 the country, (which happened to be at the time
 of the embargo, in the years 1808 and 1809,)

the standing topics of declamation, at the fede-
 ral meetings, were the errors and misconduct of
 their own government in respect to the two bel-
 ligerent powers, and the incalculable mischief
 the country was suffering from the mal-admi-
 nistration of its rulers. The democratic assem-
 blies were chiefly entertained with the abuse of
 England, whose atrocious conduct, it was al-
 leged, had rendered necessary all the restraints,
 which the government had seen fit to impose
 on the commerce of their own country. On
 certain great festivals, particularly on the 4th of
 July, the anniversary of the declaration of Ame-
 rican independence, an oration is delivered in
 one of the churches, to which all parties are in-
 vited. The avowed object of this meeting is
 to keep alive, in the minds of the people, the
 love of independence, and the memory of the

great exploits by which it was achieved : but its real purpose is, to rake up the animosities of the revolutionary war, and to perpetuate that antipathy to England, which the leaders of the democratic party find it for their interest to cherish. It is attended accordingly by few but those in the democratic interest.

In almost all the arts, by which a political party can be benefited, the democrates or republicans are an overmatch for their adversaries. Previous to elections, they exert themselves with indefatigable zeal to secure a majority : nor are they scrupulous about the means, provided the end be attained. Dissimulation, misrepresentation, and falsehood, are alternately made use of. The press, which, in this country, is the guardian of freedom, in America, is the instrument of faction. Newspapers are there multiplied to an extent unknown in any other country. The avidity for news creates a demand for them among all classes of the community ; and the general diffusion of opulence enables all ranks to gratify this inclination. In the city of New York alone, which is not more populous than

that of Edinburgh, there are published eight or nine daily papers. The most violent of these vehicles of intelligence are, of course, in the service of democracy. They are often conducted with a spirit and animation, worthy of a better cause ; and would be highly creditable to their authors, were they not disgraced by the gross and vulgar abuse, which they continually lavish on the British government and the federal party. The democratic papers, scattered over the union, propagate, to its farthest bounds, the principles and the prejudices of the faction ; whose zeal for proselytism is displayed, perhaps, more remarkably in this particular, than in any other. Whenever a township, in the back settlements, appears sufficiently advanced to support a newspaper, a press is established for the dissemination of democratic tenets. Printing-presses are now at work on spots, where, twelve years ago, not a tree was cut down : and thus the indefatigable zeal of this industrious party, endeavours to secure the accession of tracts of country that remain to be cleared, and of citizens yet unborn.

Such, my dear Sir, are the causes of democratic ascendancy which operate in every part of the Union. Other sources of the Anti-Anglican spirit, as connected with the predominance of the democratic party, are to be found in the jealousies and dissensions, that prevail among the different parts of the Union themselves, owing to the different circumstances in which they are placed ; and of these circumstances it will here be necessary to introduce a short explanation.

It is well known, that there is a considerable difference between the habits and pursuits of the people of the northern and southern states. Agriculture is chiefly cultivated in the latter, commerce and navigation in the former. The inhabitants of New England have a near resemblance to the Dutch : the prominent features of their character being enterprise, parsimony, and avidity of gain. The people of Virginia, and the southern states, on the other hand, are chiefly planters and landholders ; a description of persons, whose ideas are natural-

ly more aristocratical, and who have always regarded themselves as the *noblesse* of America. The effects of the commercial prosperity, which America has enjoyed, since the establishment of her independence, though they have been perceptible in every quarter of the Union, have been much more conspicuous in the northern, than in the southern states. The southern states, by sending their produce to Europe, have carried on a considerable foreign trade of consumption ; but the merchants of the northern states have also, till the late interruption of commerce, carried on almost the whole carrying trade of Europe ; and enriched themselves by an employment, in which their southern brethren have, comparatively speaking, had little participation. The northern merchants have thus acquired a degree of opulence, that has enabled them to outshine, in magnificence and splendour, the southern planters. Hence has arisen a competition and rivalry, that have destroyed the little cordiality, that once subsisted, between these parts of the country. The different sections of the American Union do

by no means entertain for each other those friendly sentiments, that subsist between the different provinces of the British or French empires. They regard each other with a mutual jealousy and dislike, bordering upon hatred. The inhabitants of the northern states, whose character is very similar to that of their English ancestors, dislike the arrogance and presumption of the southern slave-holders: and the southern planters, on the other hand, despise the plodding industry, and commercial spirit of the northern merchants. The commercial prosperity of the northern states has of late years inflamed the jealousy of the southern, who would, therefore, look with the less regret on a war with England, by which the commerce of their nation would be almost totally annihilated.

There is yet another reason to be assigned for the aversion of the Virginians to neutral traffic. Their spirit is too proud for this species of trade. A neutral power cannot be treated with the respect, which a belligerent always exacts. In submitting to the necessary search

for contraband goods, or foreign seamen, its vessels are liable to many insults and indignities, which a high-spirited nation cannot tamely endure. The Dutch might more easily pocket these affronts; being a people, whose territory was diminutive, and whose very existence depended upon commerce. The New Englanders are also tolerably fitted for the business, having a decided propensity to mercantile affairs; and inhabiting the territory which is the most fully peopled of any in the United States, and that, in which the channels of industry are most completely filled up. But the Virginians and Carolinians, high-spirited, haughty and fierce, lords of a territory, nearly as large as the half of Europe, of which not a tenth part is yet inhabited; from the united effect of their free government, and the practice of domestic slavery, combining the turbulence of republicans with the pride of nobility,—such a people cannot easily stoop to the indignities, which a neutral nation must lay its account with suffering. I have already observed, that the southern states profit much less by this neutral trade, than their

northern brethren : but had they even no jealousy of that part of the union, they are indignant to see the flag of their country employed as a beast of burthen, and rendered alternately the slave and the victim of contending belligerents.

For these reasons, Virginia, and the other southern states, are strongly impregnated with the anti-commercial, and, of course, Anti-Anglican spirit : and these states are now considered as the strong-hold of the antifederal, republican, or democratic party. It deserves here to be mentioned, that the southern states have, in proportion to their population, more political weight than the northern, owing to the following circumstance. By the second section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States, it is provided, that "representatives," (members of the House of Representatives,) "and direct taxes, shall be apportioned among the several states, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined, by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and ex-

“cluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all
 “other persons.” This clause was introduced,
 in order to give the southern states a representation for their slaves. There are slaves in all the states ; but the proportion of those in the southern to those in the northern, is at least ten to one. The southern states, therefore, send more members to Congress, in proportion to their free population, than the northern. They have, in consequence, more political power ; and the party, which they support, is the most likely to prevail.

There yet remains to be considered, another subordinate circumstance, by which the ascendancy of the democratic interest in America may, in part, be accounted for. This is the vast number of foreigners, who yearly land in the United States. Of these the greater part are discontented Irish, who emigrate in swarms to a country, where the wages of labour are higher than in their own ; and where they are permitted to indulge, without restraint, that hatred to the British government, which is the ruling passion of their souls. They are recei-

ved with open arms by the democratical faction, whose principles are congenial to their own ; and into whose scale they throw their whole political influence. The last Irish rebellion sent to the United States a vast crowd of rebels and United Irishmen ; and every passing year makes additions to the number. The residence, which is necessary to entitle a foreigner to the privileges of citizenship in America, has varied according to the different principles and interests of the two parties, by which the government has at different times been administered. At first, under the federal rule, if I am not much mistaken, the residence necessary was five years : but on its being found, that the greater part of those who applied for the benefit of this law, were in the habit of joining their political adversaries, the term was prolonged, by act of Congress, to fourteen years. When the democratic party came into power, they knew it to be their interest that naturalization should be as easy as possible ; and the term of residence was accordingly brought back to its old period of five years. But it is well known, that

there are modes, by which persons, who have not fulfilled the statutory residence, may obtain certificates of citizenship; and that many foreigners vote at every election, who have not been five years in the United States. It is one of the chief evils, that have resulted from the independence of the American colonies, and of which the full extent was at first very far from being clearly seen, that these republican communities, sprung from our own bosom, and speaking our own language, furnish a receptacle, in which the disaffected of all descriptions may exercise their hostility to the mother country, not only with perfect impunity, but perhaps with as much efficacy, as they could have done at home. The Irish are noted, as being the most bitter democrates in America. In the city of New York alone, there are five or six thousand of them, who all vote with the democratic party, and, as is thought by many intelligent persons, have, for several years past, turned the political scale of that city in favour of the antifederalists.

The democratic party, therefore, in the Uni-

ted States, may be said to be composed of all those persons, who cherish the animosities of the revolutionary war ; of all those who oppose the federal party from a spirit of opposition, and in consequence of being impregnated with the anti-commercial and Anti-Anglican spirit, which is so strong in the southern parts of the union ; and it comprehends, in the last place, the discontented outcasts of all descriptions from our own dominions, who of course throw their whole weight into the scale of the Anti-English party. The numbers, which, from its own nature, must necessarily repair to the standard of such a party, together with its superior activity, vigour, and energy, have for several years past given it an ascendancy over its political rivals.

I flatter myself, my dear Sir, that you have now a tolerably correct idea of the chief sources, from which the manifest hostility of the present American government to Great Britain proceeds. It arises from causes that are almost wholly internal, and very little connected with the merit or demerit of the conduct of Britain towards the United States. The persons administering the

American government manifest an aversion towards this country, and treat its government with all the insolence which they dare to exhibit, because these sentiments and that behaviour are the tenure by which they hold their offices. The American rulers are the heads and leaders of the faction, among the members of which, these principles are the watch-word and the bond of alliance : and the more steadily they adhere to these principles, the more faithful are they accounted to their trust, and the more true to the interests of their party. Most of them are adventurers in politics ; men, who choose to make their fortunes in this way ; and who, of course, are as much bound to support the views of their party, however erroneous, as an hired advocate, to plead the cause of his client, however bad. I have no doubt, that many of them secretly despise the principles they profess, and disapprove of the conduct they pursue : but they must either adhere to these principles and that practice, or abandon their party, and resign their offices and honours. The greater part of them, however, are, I suspect, by this time im-

pressed with a thorough conviction of the rectitude of their principles. For such is the power of party spirit, that the most extravagant conduct, when viewed through its distorting medium, will appear judicious, and the most criminal measures, laudable. Most, it is probable, at first joined this party from interest, and perhaps a few, from principle. But whatever were their original motives, the spirit of party, by which I mean the interest felt by every person in the success of the party, to which he has attached himself, degenerates at last, in a country like America, into a passion, which absorbs every faculty of the understanding, and every emotion of the soul.

LETTER II.

HAVING now, my dear Sir, laid before you the chief circumstances, in which the hostility of the present American government to Great Britain appears to originate, I proceed to explain certain peculiarities of the American constitution, and several accidental causes, by which that hostility has been materially aided and increased.

Of the peculiarities of the American constitution, which have contributed to the end in question, the most remarkable seems to be, the total exclusion of hereditary power and dignity. Not only are all the legislative bodies of the

United States filled by election, but all the chief executive functionaries are constituted in the same manner. The consequence of this peculiarity is, that when, from any cause, the government receives a bias, it gives way to that bias, more totally and absolutely, than it would do, were any mixture of hereditary aristocracy admitted into its composition. The rulers of America, both supreme and subordinate, are the creatures and instruments of a party; and the leading principle of their conduct of course is, to promote the interests of the party, of which they are the tools and the creatures. Their views, therefore, are less upright, less independent, and, in short, less patriotic, than those of hereditary magistrates might be expected to be. Having, besides, less interest in the prosperity and preservation of the state, they may be supposed to feel less devotion to its interests.

The author does not mean to assert, that exalted merit is necessarily the concomitant of hereditary rank; or to deny, that the most illustrious descent has often been disgraced, by the most egregious folly and the most abject baseness. But he

certainly does mean to affirm, that, *cæteris paribus*, hereditary dignity of rank is the surest guarantee of genuine dignity of sentiment : and that he, who has the largest stake in the community will, in general, feel the most anxious concern for its welfare. A great and opulent prince can seldom have in view, any other object, than the prosperity and glory of his country. Elevated by his station, no less above the cares of private industry, than the paltry avocations of political intrigue, he surveys, with calm deliberation, as from another planet, the relations of his own with foreign states ; and directs the proceedings of his ministers to that line of conduct, which seems, on the whole, most likely to promote the general interests of his dominions. The great advantage, indeed, of hereditary monarchy seems to be, that the prince, being raised far above the petty objects of private contention, is able to moderate and counteract the selfish views of his ministers, and to prevent the interests of his country from being sacrificed either to the prejudices of individuals, or the animosities of cabals and factions. The prince, in short, is

a check on the jarring interests and selfish designs of his subjects. In the United States, there is no such magistrate, and no such check. The supreme executive ruler of that country is raised from the mass of the community, by the influence of superior talents and successful intrigue; and can never regard himself in any other light, than as head of the party, to which his elevation is owing. The eminence of his station, so far from moderating, serves but to increase, the violence of his party zeal; and he holds himself bound, in duty and in gratitude, to employ the power and the influence, which his party have bestowed on him, in exalting them, and depressing their political opponents.

Whoever will take the trouble to reflect, for a moment, on the difference between an hereditary and elective chief magistracy, must be satisfied of the very different effects, which the one and the other must produce on the governments, in which they respectively exist. An hereditary sovereign is indebted, for his honours and his wealth, to the favour of no earthly being; he owes them to God and his destiny; and is re-

sponsible for the application of these blessings, and for the exercise of the power which accompanies them, only to his Maker, his conscience, and the people at large, over whom he is appointed to reign. That people he regards with an eye of equal affection ; he considers them in the light of children ; and, in the ordinary case, has no peculiar predilection for any one class of his subjects. Another sentiment, arising from his hereditary dignity, has also a powerful influence on his conduct. Being, for the most part, descended of a long and illustrious line of ancestors, he is naturally desirous to emulate the fame of his forefathers, and perpetuate the honours of his race. Very different, in all these respects, is the situation of an elective chief magistrate. For his honours and emoluments, he is indebted, not to the lustre of his descent, but to the favour of a faction, which has raised him to power, in opposition to the will, and in spite of the exertions, of a large body of the nation. By the very constitution of his authority, therefore, he is led to regard a great proportion

of his fellow-citizens, with an eye of disgust and alienation. Instead of considering them all as a great family, for whose interest he is equally bound to provide, he separates them into the two classes of friends and enemies ; and while he thinks no exertions too great for promoting the private interests of the former, he surveys the latter, not merely with cold indifference, but often with implacable hatred. If there is any part of the empire, in which his political opponents * form the majority of the people, he must necessarily consider that district as a rotten member of the body politic ; and the circumstance of hurting the interests of that member, will not be regarded as an insurmountable

* Of this there is a remarkable instance in the New England part of the American union. The four states of New England, viz. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island, are the strong-hold of the English, or federal party ; and of course, since the accession of the other party to power, they have almost uniformly been in opposition to the president and the government. The anti-commercial measures of Jefferson were thought to have been dictated, in no slight degree, by his enmity to the New England states.

objection, to any measure he may be advised to adopt. Neither has an elective magistrate the high motive of illustrious lineage to incite him to virtuous and patriotic conduct. He is chosen from the mass of the people ; and, when the term of his office expires, returns to his native obscurity. As little is he actuated by the consideration, that his posterity can be either benefited or injured, by the character of his administration. His interest in the office he exercises, compared with that of a sovereign, is a transient and fleeting interest. It is sometimes said, that the royal authority is a trust, and not a property. I maintain that it is a property, in the strictest and most literal sense of the term. The property of a prince does not merely consist in his treasures and his dignities ; it consists in the interests, the prosperity, and the glory of his people. These are the inheritance he has received from his forefathers ; these are the patrimony he transmits to his descendants. The higher the renown of his people, when he assumes the sceptre, the richer is the inheritance he receives ; and the higher he can raise that

renown, during the period of his own administration, the more improved is the estate, which he hands down to his posterity. This powerful motive of exertion is also, in a great measure, wanting to an elective magistrate. His children can hardly be affected by the success or failure of his administration. They are concerned in his personal character ; but in the prosperity of his government they have no interest, distinct from that of ordinary citizens. We may therefore conclude, that pure patriotism, genuine nobleness of sentiment, and steady, undeviating attachment to the interests of his country, are seldom to be looked for in an elective magistrate. Petty, factious, and local views, will govern his conduct, and fix the character of his administration.

This, then, is one peculiarity of the American government, which may in part account for the phenomena we are considering ; namely, the circumstance of the chief magistrate being an elective, and not an hereditary, officer : and it is to be observed, that this remark is applicable, not only to the general government of

the United States, but also to each of the governments of the individual states ; the chief magistrates, or governors of which are all, like the president of the United States, chosen in the manner of election. Another peculiarity, worthy of notice, in the American constitution, is its federal form, by which the functions of government are divided, between the general and the state governments. In consequence of this peculiarity, those powers which, in other countries, are exercised by one government, or by one set of rulers, are, in America, parcelled out and divided between two, or rather among many different sets of rulers. The effect of this partition of powers appears to be, to heighten the defects, which the rulers of America, from the causes already stated, would at any rate labour under ; to render them more factious, more turbulent, more violent ; and, when they take any bias in politics, to subject them more completely to that bias. The government of the United States (taking the words in the sense in which they are understood in Europe,) means the president and the two houses of Congress.

These depositaries of power are aptly enough, in Europe, denominated the government of the United States, because they are the organ, by which the intercourse of the United States with foreign nations is carried on. But if they are called the government of the United States, in the same sense, in which the term government is used, when applied to the governments of Europe, the words are most fallacious ; because these functionaries in America do not, in fact, exercise one-tenth part of the powers, that are exercised by the governments of Europe. This circumstance has the double effect of lessening their interest in the community, and diminishing their personal importance : thus rendering them better adapted, for what in reality they are, the tools and instruments of a faction.

It was formerly stated, that, by the constitution of the United States, the authority of the general government, comprehending the president and two houses of Congress, is confined to the management of the intercourse of the United States with foreign nations, and a very few objects of domestic concern, which can be

better managed by the general, than by the state governments. The powers of peace and war, therefore, the sending and receiving ambassadors, the appointment of the officers, civil, naval, and military, of the United States, the regulation of the coin, the customs, and the law of bankruptcy, are the exclusive province of the general government. With these exceptions, all the other powers of government are exercised by the legislatures of the individual states. The seventeen state-governments of the Union all consist, like the general government, of an executive and two houses of legislature : and each of these, within its own limits, exercises a supreme, sovereign authority, independent of, and unconnected with, the general government of the Union. The internal police, therefore, of each state, the powers of taxation, (except as to the customs,) the raising, disciplining, and officering of the militia, together with the whole body of the municipal law, both civil and criminal,—all these most important departments are, in each state, under the controul of its own peculiar legislature.

In Britain, the superintending power of the legislature extends to every branch of the empire, and every department of the state. With parental care, it watches over the domestic as well as foreign concerns of the nation ; and the same government, that has the power of declaring peace and war, has also the power of imposing taxes, and of regulating the municipal law. The concentration of these powers furnishes an additional guarantee for the patriotism of government, and at the same time invests it with that due degree of weight and dignity, which a government ought to possess. The division of powers, on the contrary, that has taken place in America, prevents the persons, who administer the general government, from ever feeling their interests, as they ought to be, completely amalgamated and identified with those of the country, whose foreign affairs they are appointed to conduct. They cannot feel the same interest in, and the same attachment to, a country, in which their authority is confronted, and their measures often condemned, by a number of independent governments, as if

their own supreme power extended over every part of the empire. In the same proportion, too, that their powers are curtailed by the rival authority of the state governments, their personal dignity is impaired, and their real importance diminished. Hence probably arises much of their insolence and arrogance. It is an old and a just remark, that the less power any body of men possesses, the more eager are they to exercise, the more ostentatious to display, that portion of authority. This observation is strikingly illustrated in the case of the American rulers. Who are the men, that pass by the name of the government of the United States, and, for the last seven or eight years, have conducted themselves, with such glaring partiality to France, and such intolerable insolence to Britain? Are they the rulers of a great and powerful nation, exercising all the functions of sovereignty, viewing all foreign states with an equal eye, and whose sole rule of conduct is a conscientious regard to the rights and interests of their country? No. They are a set of men, delegated to exercise a few of the func-

tions, and these not the most important functions, of sovereignty : they are raised to this dignity, such as it is, by the votes of a faction, in opposition to the will of nearly one half of the nation : they are taken, many of them, from the dregs of the people, to which, after strutting their hour on the public stage, they must again return : and the greater part of them receive for their services, while in office, a remuneration of five or six dollars a-day. Such are the men, who style themselves the government of the United States, and who delight to insult and to bully the British monarch and the British nation. They revile and insult the nation, which constitutes their only barrier against the ambition of France : and they not only overlook the innumerable wrongs they have received from this latter country, but behave to its government with all possible courtesy ; partly, perhaps, because the persons administering that government are, like themselves, sprung from the level of the populace, and animated by an equal dislike to the ancient dynasties, and legitimate sovereigns of the earth.

In accounting for the present disposition of the American government, it is also to be considered, that the personal character of the chief magistrate is by no means without its influence. It has often been remarked, that in Great Britain, though the king is more fettered, than perhaps any other prince, with whom we are acquainted, his personal influence is by no means imperceptible on the measures of government : and I think the personal influence of the president of the United States must be held to be at least equal to that of the British sovereign. There have now been four presidents of the United States, viz. Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Maddison. The two former have been of the federal, the two latter of the anti-federal, or republican party. By the constitution of the United States, the president must be elected every four years ; but the same person may be re-elected, as often as the nation chooses to bestow on him this mark of its confidence. Washington was twice unanimously called to the administration of the government, and of course was president for eight years. Adams

held the office only for four years : Jefferson was president for eight years ; and Maddison is now in the third year of his first presidency. The personal characters of all these gentlemen are to be considered, in an estimate of American politics. Washington is, on the whole, one of the purest and most unexceptionable characters that occurs in history : and in nothing is the excellence of his character more conspicuous, than in the uniform liberality of his sentiments towards Great Britain. If an aversion to this country were excusable in any American magistrate, it surely was so in Washington ; but nothing of this sort ever found admittance into his bosom. He regarded the conduct of the mother country, in the war with the colonies, as the offspring of ministerial error and popular prejudice : and, on the close of the contest, not only dismissed all feelings of hostility, but entertained for his ancient enemy, those sentiments of esteem and respect, to which her national character so well entitles her. He had too much respect for genuine freedom, not to feel the highest veneration for that country, which had

furnished the model of the free government, he had succeeded in bestowing on his own. This natural predilection for the land of his forefathers, was so perceptible throughout the whole course of his administration, that even the spotless purity and transcendent renown of his character, did not prevent the tongue of calumny from attributing to him, an undue partiality towards England : and the man, who conducted the armies of America, in the war with England, was stigmatized as a British agent. Similar accusations were made against his great co-adjutor Hamilton ; who entertained for the British character the same respect, and viewed the conduct of the mother country in the war, with the same liberality of sentiment. These illustrious men justly thought, that though the ties of dependence no longer existed, the identity of language, laws, religion, government, and manners, rendered England the natural ally of America ; and formed a connexion between them, which, without violence to the intentions of Providence, and injury to the interests of both nations, could not be afterwards dissolved. Mr Adams

professed, and intended to tread in the steps of Washington: but his personal influence was much less than that of his great predecessor; and, during his administration, the federal party gradually declined in strength. On the accession of Jefferson, in 1800, to the presidential dignity, new sentiments were adopted, and new principles governed the American cabinet. This gentleman had always been suspected of an antipathy to England; and, from the period of his election to the office of president, this antipathy became gradually more and more apparent; till at last he was admitted, on all hands, to be, in disposition as in office, the most conspicuous of the Anti-Anglican faction.

This propensity of Mr Jefferson has been accounted for on various *hypotheses*. He resided in France, for several years, as minister of the United States, and returned to his own country, at the commencement of the revolution. It is certain that, at this period, he carried back to America, very strong prepossessions in favour of France; a decided partiality for French manners and French liberty. The French

partialities, which he then entertained, are, therefore, sufficiently well accounted for.— But how shall we explain his adherence to these partialities, when the course of events in France has proved, in so lamentable a manner, the fallacy of his expectations, as to the establishment of a free government in that country ; and when the French, instead of being, like the Americans, the citizens of a republic, are become the slaves of the most cruel tyranny, that ever afflicted the human race ? This pertinacious adherence to French politics and French partialities, can, I think, be explained on only one supposition, that the party which entertained these monstrous principles, was, for the reasons I have endeavoured to state in the foregoing letter, destined to be the prevailing one in the country ; and that Mr Jefferson's public virtue was insufficient to contend with his private ambition. He saw, that the sweets of power and emolument would be the reward of his adherence to this line of politics ; and his zeal, seconded by his abilities, soon, accordingly, placed him at the head of the Anti-Anglican faction.

When raised to the summit of his ambition, gratitude naturally attached him still closer to the line of policy, which had procured his elevation : and his antipathy to England, thenceforward, bore the appearance, rather of a passion than a principle. Mr Maddison was originally a federalist, and a co-adjutor of Hamilton, in the composition of the distinguished work, which bears the name of that party. But he has been gradually seduced into other courses, by the operation probably of the same motives, which swayed the mind of Mr Jefferson : and, from his recent conduct, it seems likely, that he is determined, not to be inferior to his predecessor, in what constituted the most prominent feature of that gentleman's public character.

The last reason, that here occurs to be assigned, for the violence of the present ruling party in America, is, the strength of the opposite party. The French, or democratic party, though, at present, predominant in all, or at least the greater number of the states, is by no means so powerful, as to be able, altogether to despise the efforts of its antagonists. On the contrary, the

federal party exercises a steady and powerful opposition, which it requires all the efforts of the democrates to counteract; and which has the effect of rendering their attachment to the principles they profess, still more bigoted than it would otherwise be. It may seem, at first view, that the circumstance here alluded to ought rather to have the opposite effect; and that, in proportion as the party in opposition are likely to overthrow the party in power, ought the latter to be moderate in their conduct. The reverse of this, however, in reality, is the case. Every relaxation of the line of policy, hitherto pursued by the democrates, is regarded by the federalists as a victory, to be imputed to their own exertions, and a reluctant testimony, borne by their enemies themselves, to the soundness of their political principles. Every such deviation would probably be regarded in the same light by the people at large, and would therefore, in all likelihood, be rather hurtful than beneficial to their party. In consequence of the nearly equal balance maintained between the

two factions, and the frequency of the elections, at which the equality of that balance is displayed, the party in power lives in constant dread of being deprived of their power, and of course are stimulated to the most strenuous and incessant employment of all the means, by which alone, in their opinion, their ascendancy can be maintained. As the storms and tempests of a northern region but bind its inhabitants the more closely to their rocks and mountains ; so the political shocks and dangers to which this party is continually exposed, have no other effect, than that of making them cling the closer to their darling prejudices. Besides, they know, that the more rigidly they adhere to their own principles, or, in other words, the more directly they shock and thwart the principles and sentiments of their opponents, the more they will hurt the feelings of these opponents : and this is a consideration which, in a country, where party spirit runs so high as in America, is by no means without its influence.

Such appears to me to be a fair and a tolerably full account of the causes of that antipathy

of the American government to this country, of which we have, of late years, had so many convincing proofs. The considerations, stated in this and the preceding letter, are, in my estimation, amply sufficient to account for this bias of the American government, without having recourse to the supposition of French bribery, which is employed by some in the solution of the problem. This account of the matter I am inclined wholly to disregard : not only, because direct bribery, according to the remark of Mr Hume, is much less frequent, among public men, than the vulgar are apt to imagine ; but because, from the peculiar nature of the American constitution, the bribery of its public functionaries may be pronounced to be nearly, if not wholly, impossible, and beyond the means of the great Napoleon himself. In the United States, no one individual has so much influence, as to render the bribing him of much consequence ; and of course, if bribery is made use of at all, it must be practised among so great a number of people, and conducted on so systematic a plan, as would evince a profligacy of

sentiment, and deprivation of principle, which we cannot suppose to exist in any numerous body of men whatever. The sweets of power and emolument are sufficient bribes to induce the rulers of America to persevere in the line of conduct, they for some years past have followed ; and I conscientiously believe, that these are all the bribes they receive.

From whatever causes the Anti-Anglican spirit of the American government may be thought to proceed, none will deny that it has lately manifested itself in *conduct towards this country, which is sufficient to justify the most hostile feelings, on the part of the British government. In mitigation, however, of these feelings, I here beg leave to state two observations, which appear to flow as corollaries from the doctrine, which it has been the humble aim of these letters to unfold, and which may therefore, in part, have been anticipated by the preceding observations.

The first is, that the Anti-Anglican spirit of

* Renewal of the Non-intercourse, affair of the Little Belt. and equipment of French privateers in American ports.

the American government seems to proceed, in a very great degree, if not entirely, from causes that are internal, operating within the United States, and having no reference to the conduct or character of the British government, or British nation. With the exception of one or two, the numerous causes, above stated, are all of this description. The mutual rivalry and hatred of the two factions, the superior adaptation of French politics to the views and dispositions of a turbulent democracy, the English connexions and partialities of the federalists, the jealousies that subsist between the different sections of the Union, the peculiarities of the American constitution, and personal characters of the leading men,—all these are internal causes, or at least causes, whose operation is independent of the conduct or character of Great Britain. Indeed, of all the causes above enumerated, there are only three, that have any reference to Great Britain. These are the animosities left by the revolutionary war, the efforts of discontented emigrants from this country, and the naval pre-eminence of Great Britain. The first of these causes has

undoubtedly some influence in America, but an influence that is always diminishing. As to the second, it is better, that united Irishmen, and other discontented emigrants, should discharge their venom on the other side of the Atlantic, than in the bosom of their own country : and as to the third, it seems entitled to even less regard, than either of the other two. The power and pre-eminence of our country, particularly in a naval point of view, excite the envy and malignity of the democratic party in America ; and it therefore serves the purposes of the leaders of that party, to manifest hostility towards us. But this power and pre-eminence ought only to induce us to regard, with calm indignation and silent contempt, the puny hostility it engenders.

I repeat, therefore, that the antipathy of the American government to this country arises from causes, that are almost wholly internal, that cannot be understood, without some knowledge of the domestic circumstances of the United States, and that have no reference to this

country, farther than as the present situation of this country, in respect to France, happens to suit the views of their selfish demagogues, and the purposes of their paltry politics. The antipathy in question proceeds from the struggles and convulsions of a turbulent and ferocious democracy, from the contentions incident to a people, who are ruled by universal suffrage and elective magistracy, and from the animosities of conflicting parties, who hate each other, much more, than any of them hates us. Any direct injuries, therefore, that may proceed from this hostility, are scarcely more to be regarded, than a blow, which we accidentally receive from a madman in his ravings, or from a person, who is labouring under a fit of the epilepsy.

The second observation, that here occurs to be made, is, that the very violence of the present government of America is a convincing proof of its weakness. It has been already stated, that the constant terror in which the republican party is kept, by the pressure of federal influence and activity, adds much to its bitterness

and its zeal. Were it more firmly established than it in reality is, it would pursue its course with more calmness, moderation, and dignity : it would act more from patriotic and disinterested views : it would act less from mere pique, malice, and resentment. The very violence, therefore, of the republican party in America is a satisfactory proof of its weakness ; and, from this and various other considerations, it is evident, that the hostility of the American government is less to be regarded, than that of any other government on the face of the earth. The violence of the French party in the United States is, in fact, the best evidence of the strength of the English party ; the best evidence, that there still exists in that country, a powerful party, attached to the land of their forefathers, uninfluenced by blind passions and sordid interests, and possessed of sufficient weight, to prevent an interested faction, from carrying into practice their destructive principles, or executing their audacious threats.

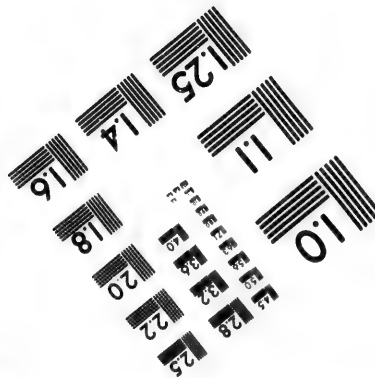
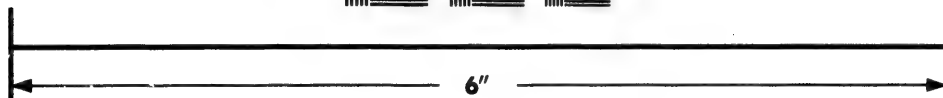
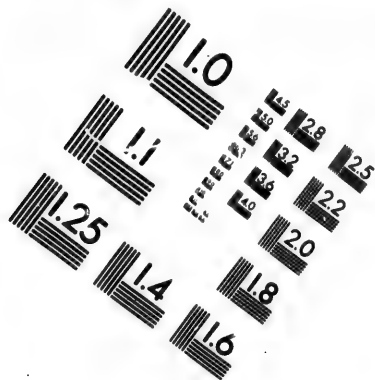
Of the various causes, that have been assigned, for the remarkable bias, lately manifested by

the American government, you will easily perceive, that I consider the institution of universal suffrage, as one of the most deserving of notice ; or rather, that all the causes, that have been assigned, presuppose the existence of, and owe their efficiency to, this institution. This, it appears to me, is almost the *origo mali* ; this is the circumstance, that gives life, and vigour, and energy, to all the causes I have attempted to explain. And hence, my dear Friend, may chiefly be accounted for, what always seems to persons on this side of the Atlantic, so incomprehensible a paradox, that the Americans, a nation of freemen, should entertain so strong a predilection for France, which is a land of tyranny, and so strong a dislike to England, which is a land of freedom : not to mention, that England is the only country, which now preserves the remains of the civilized world, and America herself, from the overwhelming domination of France. Whoever reflects, for a moment, on the composition of the republican party in America, and on the uniform tendency of universal suffrage, to which it owes its exist-

ence, will cease to wonder at this seemingly unnatural propensity. The republican party, in the United States, consists of a populace, who are governed by their passions, and of leaders, who are ruled by their interests. The policy, adopted by such a party, must necessarily be a coarse and illiberal policy. It must be a policy suited to the *profanum vulgus* ; to the views and capacities of a rude, illiterate, and ferocious populace. Such exactly is the policy of the republican faction in America. Those sentiments of respect and admiration, which the bare mention of the English name ought, at the present moment, to excite in the heart, not only of every American, but of every human being, whose heart is rightly constituted, the federalists alone are susceptible of. That highly estimable body entertain and express for England, the consideration to which she is so well entitled, not only, from her being, at present, the bulwark of the civilized world, and the asylum of oppressed humanity, but, in a more peculiar degree, from her having so long been the nurse of true religion, of genuine liberty, of sound literature ;

and as having furnished the model of that free government, and of those equal laws, which constitute the proudest distinction of the American commonwealth. Very different are the views and sentiments of the republican party. They can see little difference between a nation that is ruled by a king, and one that is governed by an emperor ; a great part of them probably do not know, that the government of England is better than that of France. They treasure up the miseries and animosities of the revolutionary war ; they vilify England, because the federalists express respect and esteem for her character ; they pass over the injuries they receive from France, because, if they were at war with that country, they have scarcely any means of coming into contact with her, in consequence of the protection they receive from her rival ; they are encouraged and supported in their Anti-Anglican measures, by the exhortations and example of discontented Irish, and other foreigners ; their zeal is inflamed and exasperated by the unremitting efforts of their leaders, and by the vigorous opposition of the federal





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party ; and thus it happens, that, in a republican country, the ruling party is hostile to this land of freedom, and attached to a nation of slaves.

After the most mature and deliberate consideration I have been able to give to the subject, I am come to be satisfied, that the American government has not, and never had, any serious intention or wish to go to war with this country. It suits their purposes to threaten a war with England ; but they must know how greatly they would overshoot the mark, were they to attempt to put these threats in execution. None will be inclined to controvert this doctrine, who considers, for a moment, the dreadful and inevitable calamities, which a war with Great Britain would inflict on America. The annihilation of her commerce and navy, the destruction of her sea-ports, the dismemberment of her union, and a bloody civil war, are the bitter fruits which, in all likelihood, she would reap in this ruinous undertaking. There is another consequence, likely to result to America, from a war with this country, which we would consider as

an advantage, but which would be regarded by her present rulers, in a very different point of view,—I mean a change of administration. The first effect of a war would be the destruction of American commerce: the destruction of commerce necessarily involves the destruction of the revenue, for the revenue of the United States arises almost entirely from the customs: in order to carry on the war, therefore, as well as the ordinary business of government, loans must be resorted to, and direct taxes imposed. But direct taxes would be felt as an intolerable burthen by the people of America; they would speedily remove the present administration, in order to restore peace and commerce to their country; and thus the American rulers would fall the first victims to what has been believed by many, to be their favourite measure. Unless, therefore, we suppose the government of America to be destitute not only of all principle and patriotism, but even of common understanding, and common regard to their own interest, we cannot suppose them to be serious in their wish for a British war.

That there is, however, a number of persons in America, who are sincerely desirous of a war with this country, there can, unfortunately, be no doubt. To this class belong all the united Irishmen, and other discontented foreigners. Such is the blind hatred of these persons to the British government, that they would gladly see America at war with it, for the sake of the little injury, which might result to England, however destructive such war might prove to the interests of their adopted country. There is also a description of persons in America, both natives and foreigners, who are desirous of war, for the very reason, that it would probably give rise to some intestine convulsion. Having nothing to lose, they entertain no apprehensions from any confusion that a war would occasion ; and even anticipate plunder in the general wreck, that might overspread the country. Though the number of persons of this description ought, from the circumstances in which she is placed, to be smaller in America, than in any other country whatever, I have reason to believe that, even there, their number is not inconsiderable.

It is to be hoped, however, that the influence of the wise and good will always be sufficient, to frustrate the nefarious schemes of such desperadoes.

Of all the effects, that would result to America from a British war, the only one, that would be advantageous to Great Britain, is a change in the American administration. All the others would constitute evils, which would be hardly less prejudicial to this country, than to that which they immediately affected. Whatever retards the prosperity of America, must hurt the prosperity of England; because America must, for many years, form a great and increasing outlet for the manufactures of the mother country. It cannot be disputed, that a separation of the Union, with the wars and disasters which would accompany it, would check the growth of the American states; and whatever partial benefits might arise to this country, from the alliance of any one of the confederacies, into which the Union might be divided, it seems undeniable, that the very act of disunion would be a positive evil to Britain. Neither is it to be overlooked, that

the miseries of a British war, and those of the civil war, which would probably follow, would be most severely felt by that portion of the American people, which is friendly to the British nation. The federalists compose a most numerous and respectable body, who have opposed, with all their influence, the baneful policy, which their government has been lately pursuing. A regard for their interest ought to serve as one motive, at least, to induce the British government, to abstain from hostilities with America ; because it is on them, that the evils of these hostilities would fall with the heaviest pressure. They are, generally speaking, the people of property, of education, of family ; and it is persons of this description, who suffer most severely in civil broils. America is the only free nation, besides our own, now remaining in the world. She has hitherto advanced in the career of improvement with unexampled rapidity ; and if her progress is not prematurely checked, she seems destined to arrive at a height of greatness to which no nation has hitherto attained, and which will reflect immortal honour

on her British origin.* The unnatural dismemberment of such a country, with its concomitant evils of civil wars and sanguinary revolutions, would present a spectacle, which it would be shocking to humanity to behold, and

* To the admirers of the fulness and majesty of the English language, it may be consolatory to reflect, that while French arms, and the French tongue, are pervading every section of Europe,—there is, on the other side of the Atlantic, a nation capable of preserving and transmitting it to future generations. Supposing the French to supersede all others in Europe, yet, a century hence, the English will be spoken by the greatest numbers.—*Inchiquin's Letters*, p. 105. A work published at New York, in 1810.

Like the vast wastes, that were kept as a frontier by the ancient Gauls, the Atlantic ocean forms a perpetual natural protection of America from the invasions of Europe; a barrier sufficient in itself at present, while the only power that could become an invader is unable to keep the sea, which is ruled by a power unable to invade. At no distant day, the stationary strength of Europe may be counterpoised by the increased strength of America; and the current of irruption, which for so many thousand years has proceeded from east to west, having reached the limits of its action, may recoil, and trace back its steps from the populous and mighty West, to the reduced and prostrate East.—*Ibid.* p. 162.

disgraceful for any country to have contributed to produce.

Such of the Americans, as really and anxiously wish for a war with this country, would be well pleased to see it begun, provided the *odium* of it could be thrown on the British government. They are afraid to strike the first blow ; but if England could be provoked to do so, they would enter on the war with alacrity, knowing, that during its progress they would be able to mortify, and perhaps to take still more substantial revenge, on their political opponents. They would also cherish the expectation, that, by the operation of hostilities, the breach between the countries would be irreparably widened, and, at the same time, so much discredit thrown on the English party, that it would never afterwards be able to give them any serious annoyance. The democratic party, powerful as it is, is not yet strong enough to undertake the tremendous responsibility, of being the aggressors in a war with England.

If ever the Americans do declare war against Great Britain, it will probably be at a time,

when their internal dissensions have arrived at such a height, and when the jealousies and quarrels, between the northern and southern sections of the Union, have so nearly approached to open hostilities, that each party is only waiting for a pretence to declare war against the other. In such a case, the proclamation of war against Britain will be the signal of civil contention : it will be the consummation and the issue of those political disputes, which have hitherto nourished and been nourished, by the sentiment of hatred to England : and the same measure, that has already introduced one revolution in America, may probably be the precursor of another. When this period arrives, (and I hope and trust it is yet far, very far distant,) it will be for the wisdom of the British government, to adopt such measures, as the exigency of the case may require ; and, while they watch the natural, though premature dissolution of the American empire, to direct their own amity, and their own hostility, in such a manner, as may best promote the aggrandisement of that fragment of the Union, which

embraces the alliance of England. At present, it is evidently the policy of England to practise the utmost forbearance towards America : to disregard the self-interested and unsteady proceedings of the narrow-minded rulers of a factious republic ; and, so long as war is not actually declared, to cultivate the spirit, and preserve the appearances, of peace and amity. By persevering in this line of conduct, we shall show the people of America, that we are more attentive to their interests, than their own government are ; and may possibly contribute, in no inconsiderable degree, to the rise of the federal, and depression of the French party. The policy here recommended, however ungrateful it may be to our passions and prejudices, is certainly that, which our interests dictate : and it affords me very sincere pleasure to observe, that this is actually the policy, which his Majesty's ministers seem at present determined to pursue.

POSTSCRIPT.

IN the foregoing pages, the author has purpose-ly abstained from any discussion of the points, immediately in dispute, between the British and American governments ; because these have been discussed, with much greater ability than he can pretend to, by persons, whose travels have never extended beyond the limits of Europe ; and the author's sole object was, to lay before the public such information, as only a personal acquaintance with the United States could afford the means of acquiring. His object has been to show, that there exists in the

American government, a hostility towards this country, independent of any measures, which the British government may pursue ; and if, by laying open those peculiar circumstances, in the situation of America, which may be said, in a manner, to compel her involuntarily to dislike England, and of course to be partial to France, he shall, in any degree, be successful in removing the prejudices so generally entertained on this subject, or lessening the desire for war, which seems to be fast gaining ground, his purposes will be fully accomplished, and his labour amply rewarded.

The affair of the Chesapeake has been settled, in a manner equally creditable to the candour and liberality of the British government ; and the affair of the Little Belt, it is to be hoped, will be brought to an equally satisfactory termination. The Orders in Council (the grand source of dispute between the countries,) are a field too extensive to be entered on at present ; but the author may be permitted, in one word, to observe, that the whole conduct of the British government, in relation to these Orders,

seems to have been strictly conformable, not only to the principles of sound policy, but to the laws of nations, as necessarily modified by the unprecedented circumstances of modern times. A neutral trade is a trade, that owes its existence to the toleration of belligerents ; a trade, suffered to proceed in time of war, because it alleviates the calamities of war, and is subservient, not only to the profit of the neutral trader, but to the accommodation of both belligerents. The convenience of the belligerents is, however, the primary object of this species of traffic ; the profit of the trader is only a secondary consideration. Neutral trade, therefore, can only be carried on, under such regulations, as the belligerents choose to impose ; and if the belligerents find, that it is not essential to their accommodation ; or if, for the sake of annoying each other, or from any other motive whatever, they wish to suspend it, it follows, from the very definition of neutral trade, that they have a right to do so. The whole body of French Decrees and British Orders in Council, taken as a system, may be regarded as a sort of

tacit agreement, between France and England, that neutral trade shall no longer be carried on. The British government was at first justified in issuing the Orders in Council, by the conduct of the French government in issuing their Decrees; and until satisfactory evidence is produced, that the Decrees are really and *bona fide* rescinded, the Orders ought certainly to be continued in force. It would even seem, that, under the very peculiar circumstances of modern times, a broader view of the right of the British government to issue these Orders may be taken, than what results from the principle of retaliation; and that, though the French Decrees had never existed, the British Cabinet would have had a good right to issue the Orders in Council, on finding, that the Americans carried on, in fact, the whole trade of France, and deprived England of almost all the advantages, which, in regard to the annoyance of her enemy, she was entitled to derive from her naval supremacy. In all former wars, the naval power of the contending parties has been pretty equally balanced, and the rules, prescri-

bed for the regulation of neutrals, have been promulgated by the joint authority of all the belligerents. In this war, however, there is but one belligerent, that appears on the ocean ; the powers and prerogatives, that used to be divided among several, have been absorbed, by the resources and valour of the nation, that rules the seas. By the laws, therefore, of nature and nations, as well as by the principles of common sense, this predominant power must have a right to enact laws for the regulation of its own element, and to confine the trade of neutrals, within such bounds, as its own rights and interests require to be drawn.

The diminution of neutral trade, necessarily occasioned by this just exercise of the maritime rights of Britain, is at present made use of by the American rulers, as a convenient handle to inflame the populace against England ; and they even seem to be holding out the extraordinary proposal of vindicating, what they call their neutral rights, by force of arms. This scheme, if seriously entertained, will be no less abortive in execution, than it is absurd in theory. An

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armed neutral is a contradiction in terms. When a nation arms for the purpose of asserting neutral rights, it ceases to be a neutral ; and America may rest assured, that the cause of neutrality will never be promoted, by her assuming the character of a belligerent. At present, she has it in her power to enjoy the whole of that large and valuable branch of trade, which she has hitherto been accustomed to carry on with the British dominions. If she goes to war for the purpose of asserting her neutral rights, she will lose the trade of Britain, without recovering that of France. Her commerce will be swept from the ocean ; and, at the end of the war, neutral rights will be found in exactly the same situation, in which they stood at the beginning.

The preceding Letters were in the press, before the arrival of the last accounts from America, announcing, that the hostile resolutions of the Committee of Foreign Relations had been passed, by a large majority, in the House of Representatives. This intelligence has been considered as bearing a very warlike aspect ;

but the fact is, that there is scarcely any thing in it, to induce an opinion, that war is more likely, at present, than it has been for a considerable time past. The resolutions are little more violent, than have resounded through the United States, on the meeting, not only of the House of Representatives, but of every legislative body, for the last three or four years ; and the threat of war is now clamorously renewed ; partly with the view of intimidating the British Cabinet ; but chiefly for the purpose of impressing on the people of the United States, and particularly on the democratic party, a deep sense of the vigour and energy of the government ; and thereby securing the re-election of Mr Maddison to the office of president. The member, who brings up the Report to the House, explicitly admits, that America is not yet in such a situation, as would justify her putting herself in the attitude of war ; and he might have added, that many years must elapse, before this attitude can be safely assumed by her.

The two chief inducements to a war with this country, held out by Mr Porter, in regard

to the means of annoyance, possessed by America, are, that she would be able to harass the British trade, particularly in the West Indies ; and also, that she would be able to conquer Canada. The first of these temptations to war is too ridiculous to require any comment ; and as to the second, even admitting that America has the means of subduing Canada, it is certain that she would suffer a much greater misfortune, in the acquisition of this province, than Britain would sustain, from the loss of it. The Canadians are by no means a people well calculated to form a constituent member of a republican confederation : and besides, the territory of the United States being at present too extensive, the addition of the immense province of Canada would only increase the already imminent danger of disunion. The conquest of Canada, in 1763, was one of the immediate causes of the revolution of 1775. As soon as they were relieved from the pressure of an enemy on their frontier, the colonists began to quarrel with the mother country : and should the United States be now relieved from the salutary neighbour-

hood of a foreign power, they would speedily begin to quarrel among themselves. The unwieldy mass, when no longer cemented by any external influence, would fall asunder by its own weight : and the conquest of Canada would thus have been the immediate forerunner of two of the most remarkable events, in the history of the western world.

The only particular, in which the intelligence, last received from America, is more alarming, than what has preceded it, is the very large majority, by which the hostile resolutions have been carried through the House of Representatives. This, however, is satisfactorily enough accounted for by the report, now prevalent, that the minority in Congress have resorted to the desperate expedient of supporting, instead of opposing, all the measures of government ; in the hope, that their violence may plunge the country into some difficulty, that may produce a change of administration. After a long and severe struggle, finding all their efforts to resist the baneful policy pursued by the government, only attended by fresh disappointments

and defeats, the federalists, it is said, have determined to try the experiment, of giving, for a time, full scope to the violence of the government, and thus affording the people an opportunity of *feeling* the evils, which they are unable or unwilling to foresee, must infallibly result from the policy of their present rulers. If this account is true, some great event may be considered as at hand. A change of the American administration would be one of the most fortunate events, that could happen, both for America and England. But if this consequence failed to result from the concurrence of the federalists in the hostile measures of government, there is much danger, that a declaration of war would be followed by a dismemberment of the Union.

5th Feb. 1812.

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